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ABSTRACT

The status of the refugees in Africa and the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is charted on a country by country basis in this report. The size of the refugee population and their needs are described along with various assistance efforts directed at improving their situation. Sums of money spent by UNHCR office are recorded for each African nation. (APM)

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Refugees in Africa

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a country by country survey

ICARA
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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA

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a country by country survey

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Introduction

In 1970, the number of refugees in Africa was estimated at three-quarters of a million; by 1980 it was estimated at 5 million and it is still growing.

One in every two refugees in the world is from Africa; that is, of the 10 million refugees around the world, half are in Africa. The total number of African refugees now exceeds the population of many African countries.

The largest refugee problem on the continent is in the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, the refugee population has now exceeded the one million mark. In Djibouti, 12% of the population are refugees. Elsewhere on the continent, the civil war in Chad caused hundreds of thousands of women and children to flee into Cameroon, Nigeria and Sudan.

The categories of assistance normally accorded to refugees by the United Nations are as follows:

- ☐ Emergency assistance (for new refugees). This includes short-term, rapidly implemented measures of immediate relief including provision of basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and blankets, household utensils and equipment and basic health care.
- ☐ Intermediate assistance. This includes interim relief measures aimed at consolidating the infrastructure and laying the foundation for long-term solutions.
- ☐ Long-term solutions. These consist of activities leading initially to the economic self-sufficiency of the group concerned and ultimately to voluntary repatriation or to the social, economic and administrative integration of the refugees into their area of residence.

The magnitude of the refugee problem in Africa has made it necessary for the United Nations to convene an International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, to be held on 9-10 April 1981 in Geneva.

One of the major objectives of the Conference is to obtain additional resources to enable African countries to meet the already burdensome responsibility of hosting several million refugees. The Conference will also attempt to focus the attention of the international community on the plight of African refugees.

The present brochure provides a country-by-country survey of refugees in Africa, together with UNHCR's assistance programmes and related activities in 1980. It has been presented as intended for information of the public. It is not as such an official document, nor does it claim to represent comprehensively the detailed work of UNHCR.

Information in this brochure is for the most part, accurate only up to the end of December 1980. More up-to-date information on the subjects covered in this survey may be obtained from:

UNHCR
United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees
Public Information Section.
Telephone: 31 02 61

Correspondence may be addressed to:
UNHCR,
Palais des Nations,
CH-1211 Geneva 10.

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Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

UNHCR works in these countries for European refugees in need of constant assistance, since most of them are aged and many are physically and socially handicapped; for refugees from Latin America who require assistance towards local settlement; and for African refugees, mostly students, who are provided with educational assistance or temporary allowances pending their placement in educational institutions or in employment. These three categories number some 3,000 individuals and the Office spent some US $150,000 in these countries in 1980. UNHCR also reviewed in 1980 the situation of refugees from Western Sahara in Algeria who will be assisted under the General Programmes in 1981.

Angola

There are at present about 73,000 refugees in Angola, of whom 18,000 are Zairians, 50,000 are Namibians and 5,000 are South Africans.

In addition to its assistance to these groups, UNHCR was also responsible for measures facilitating the return and rehabilitation of some 100,000 (50,000 in 1979 and 50,000 in 1980) Angolans who returned from Zaire. It is anticipated that this movement will be followed by that of many more Angolans still living in Zaire. Plans are under discussion for the construction of a transit centre near Luanda which might receive up to 1,500 returnees from Zaire or elsewhere.

Although the majority of Zairean refugees in Angola have returned to their homeland following the decree of June 1978, some 18,000 have chosen to stay behind and UNHCR is co-operating closely with the government in measures for their permanent settlement.

The needs of Namibian refugees, arriving in increasing numbers in Angola, have been a source of constant concern to UNHCR. Efforts have been directed towards meeting the immediate needs of these refugees while seeking also to provide them with the means, albeit limited, of attaining greater self-sufficiency. Despite the best efforts of UNHCR and other agencies, the situation of these refugees remains critical.

UNHCR spent some US$ 4.8 million in Angola in 1980.

Botswana

The year marked a major change in the refugee situation in Botswana. The number of refugees in the country had increased steadily throughout 1979, due to new arrivals from Zimbabwe, whose nationals accounted for as many as 96% of the 23,000 refugees at the end of the year. But with the Lancaster House Agreement, which brought the civil war in Southern Rhodesia to an end, the flow was dramatically reversed. UNHCR supervised the repatriation from Botswana of 18,200 Zimbabweans in early 1980. Some 1,700 Zimbabwean refugees had already repatriated by their own means. The Government of Botswana now uses the facilities created for Zimbabweans at the Dukwe settlement for rural and urban refugees in Botswana for whom no other durable solution had been found. Agricultural activity continues, while other refugees received training in skills such as carpentry and tailoring.

The emphasis on educational assistance to Southern African refugee students has remained a priority in Botswana. The Education Resource Centre now situated at Dukwe continues to offer remedial programmes and correspondence courses to refugees. Classes also began early in 1980 at two secondary schools constructed with financial assistance from UNHCR.

The refugee population in Botswana now stands at some 3,400 persons.

The total UNHCR allocations for refugees in Botswana amounted to US $3.27 million in 1980.

Burundi

The number of refugees in Burundi, most of whom are of Rwandese origin, is estimated at some 234,590. A large proportion of these refugees live in urban areas and most of them are jobless. UNHCR has focused its efforts on improving their lot through the establishment of small family businesses or through apprenticeships. Local settlement assistance has also included appropriations to cover costs incurred in transferring refugees in the capital, Bujumbura, to rural settlements, wherever this solution was feasible. UNHCR also provides assistance for refugee schools.

At the request of the Government of Burundi, UNHCR plans to contribute to the cost of building a hospital in the province of Ruigi where the presence of a large number of Rwandese refugees has placed a considerable strain on local medical and other services.

UNHCR spent some US $400,000 in Burundi in 1980.

Cameroon
(United Republic of)

Following events in Chad, tens of thousands of Chadian refugees crossed the Chari River and entered the northern province of Cameroon. They concentrated in and around the town of Kousseri, increasing the population (formerly 10,000) more than eleven-fold. The new influx of refugees drove UNHCR's initial budgetary estimates for 1980 up from US $0.5 million to US $8.8 million.

The number of refugees is now estimated by the Government at 266,000.

Central African Republic

The total number of refugees in the Central African Republic is estimated at 7,000.

With the arrival in spring 1979 of 1,000 refugees from Chad, UNHCR obligated US $83,000 from the Emergency Fund in response to the Government's appeal for assistance in meeting the needs for this group. In mid-1980, a UNHCR mission visited the Central African Republic to review the situation, in view of the continued arrival of refugees from Chad.

Following this mission another US $300,000 has been drawn from the Emergency Fund to face the first needs of the 6,000 newly arrived refugees from Chad.

Djibouti

The continued movement of refugees into Djibouti during 1980 drove the total number of refugees there to over 42,000.

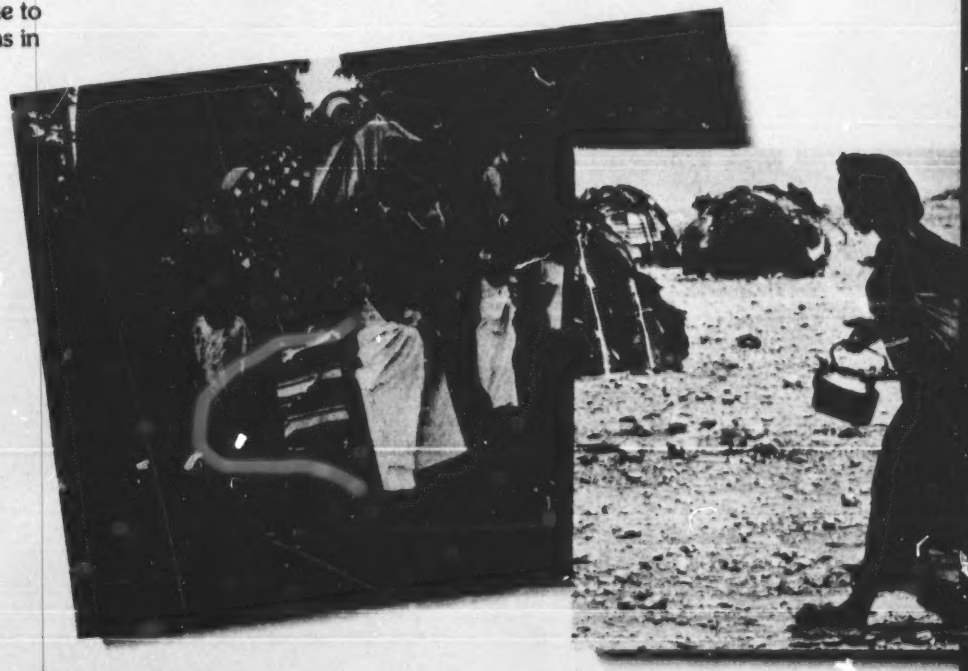
Refugees now constitute a sizeable percentage (about 12%) of Djibouti's total population.

Many of the refugees are of rural background, but their settlement in agriculture is largely impracticable due to the harsh climatic conditions, which have been further aggravated by persistent drought in this area of Africa.

Many Ethiopian refugees of urban background continue to live in precarious conditions in the capital city. Those enjoying refugee status number over 4,100, but many thousands more are living unidentified among the local population. Their presence weighs heavily upon the economy of the country, particularly in view of the low living standards and high unemployment rate (as high as 50%). Intensified efforts have, therefore, been made by UNHCR to promote counselling services.

Many of these refugees are students for whom the only solution lies in placement in schools or colleges in other countries. Meanwhile, plans are under way for a transit centre designed to house refugees and improve their chances of resettlement through some vocational training.

UNHCR's total budget for Djibouti in 1980 was around US $4.87 million.



Egypt

The estimated number of refugees of concern to UNHCR in Egypt remained unchanged at some 5,000. Of the 1,200 that receive regular monthly assistance, 400 are destitute and aged refugees of European origin; the remainder are African, mostly from Ethiopia. For the resident European caseload, assistance measures have been directed towards the local integration of refugees through job placement, the establishment or consolidation of small businesses, provision of shelter, medical care and counselling services. Financial assistance in the form of annuities has been provided for aged and destitute cases. The vast majority of African cases receive educational assistance including vocational/technical training, and this has remained a major priority. The resettlement abroad of refugees residing in Egypt, including the younger stateless cases of European origin, continues to prove difficult, but a number of African refugees who have completed their education are being successfully resettled and efforts are being made to find employment in the area for others.

UNHCR spent US $1.3 million in Egypt in 1980, the bulk on education.

Ethiopia

In 1980 it was reported that several thousand Ethiopians who sought refuge in neighbouring countries as a result of internal unrest and natural disasters were returning to their country of origin.

Towards the end of the year UNHCR provided funds for an initial assistance project to benefit some 10,000 returnees. The project, valued at some US $1.3 million, covers the construction of reception centres and provision of immediate relief to the returnees, together with distribution of self-sufficiency packages to facilitate the rehabilitation of the returning population.

It is expected that greater numbers of Ethiopian refugees will be repatriated in the near future.

Gabon

The number of refugees in Gabon is estimated at some 30,000. With the change of regime in Equatorial Guinea, spontaneous repatriation of Guineans was carried out under UNHCR auspices. UNHCR also continued to provide limited assistance of various kinds, mainly for educational purposes.

UNHCR's revised allocations for 1980 amounted to US $240,000.

Ghana

In Ghana, where refugees, originating mostly from southern Africa, number some 200, emphasis has been placed on educational assistance. Scholarships at primary and lower secondary level are being provided, and assistance to individual refugees, many of whom are without employment, is continuing. In view of the severely limited labour market, assistance needs are increasing, though efforts are being made towards attaining durable solutions in place of immediate aid, notably through the promotion of counselling.

UNHCR spent nearly US $200,000 in Ghana in 1980.

Kenya

At the beginning of 1980, there were some 5,800 refugees in Kenya of whom 3,500 were Ugandans. The remainder consisted of Ethiopians and Rwandese and smaller groups of various origins. During the first four months of 1980, the most significant change in the refugee population was the repatriation of about 2,000 Ugandans to their country and an influx of a small group of Ethiopian and Rwandese refugees into Kenya.

As in previous years, assistance was provided towards the local integration individual refugees, for of educational and vocational training, for counselling services and supplementary assistance was provided for destitute refugees. The refugee population in Kenya now stands at some 3,500 persons.

UNHCR spent over US $2 million in Kenya on these activities and on the voluntary repatriation programme.

Morocco	500
Algeria	52,000
Egypt	5,000
Nigeria	110,000
Senegal	5,000
Sudan	490,000
Ghana	200
Central African Rep.	7,000
Cameroon	266,000
Uganda	112,400
Gabon	30,000
Zaire	400,000

SOURCE: *Host governments*

NOTE: *The above figures are not exhaustive in that they apply to registered refugees only. Returnees are not included although they receive international assistance toward their initial rehabilitation.*

Number of refugees in Africa by country

Djibouti	42,000
Ethiopia	11,000
Somalia	1,540,000
Kenya	3,500
Rwanda	10,150
Burundi	234,590
Tanzania	140,000
Angola	73,000
Zambia	33,500
Mozambique	100
Botswana	3,400
Swaziland	10,000
Lesotho	10,000

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Lesotho

The total number of refugees in Lesotho is estimated by the Government of Lesotho at 10,000. As a result of the continuing process relating to the determination of refugee status, some 2,000 of these had been formally granted asylum. In 1980, as in previous years, UNHCR assistance has been extended also to persons awaiting the official determination of their refugee status by the Government. UNHCR continues to focus on providing additional educational facilities at the secondary and technical levels to enhance employment prospects for refugees, and also to encourage the authorities to continue their liberal admission policy towards Southern African refugee students.

The UNHCR allocations for refugees in Lesotho amounted to US $589,600 in 1980.

Mozambique

The dramatic developments in Zimbabwe brought major changes to the refugee situation in Mozambique. Following the Lancaster House Agreement in December 1979, the repatriation of Zimbabweans was begun under UNHCR auspices. During the first phase of the repatriation, aimed at the return of refugees prior to the general election at the end of February 1980, some 11,000 Zimbabweans in Mozambique were repatriated with UNHCR assistance. Another 15,000 went home when the organized repatriation programme resumed after the elections in April 1980. In addition, large numbers of Zimbabweans in Mozambique have returned to their country on their own.

UNHCR's allocations for Mozambique, including for the repatriation programme, amounted to US $11.7 million in 1980.

Since the departure of the Zimbabwean refugees there are no UNHCR-sponsored organized refugee settlements in Mozambique and emphasis is now being placed on assistance to individual refugees coming mainly from South Africa.

The refugee population in Mozambique now stands at some 100 persons.

Nigeria

According to the Government there are at present some 110,000 refugees in Nigeria, of whom some 104,920 Chadian refugees would require UNHCR-co-ordinated assistance. Other UNHCR activities in Nigeria include the provision of scholarships for refugee students from Southern Africa and legal and counselling services. Nigeria also became UNHCR's largest African donor, in 1980, with a contribution of nearly US $1 million towards the Office's programme in Zimbabwe.

Rwanda

The refugee population in Rwanda is estimated at some 10,150 mainly from Burundi and Uganda. UNHCR's activities in this country include the provision of emergency relief to new refugees and educational assistance, at lower secondary, higher secondary, technical and university levels. UNHCR's 1980 budget in Rwanda amounted to some US $300,000.

Senegal

The number of refugees, of various origins, residing in Senegal was estimated at the beginning of 1980 at 5,000. UNHCR contributed to the implementation of a fishery project which helped achieve self-sufficiency for a group of refugees. The Office's total expenditures in 1980 were about US $820,000.

Somalia

"The biggest refugee problem in the world" is how the High Commissioner described, the crisis in Somalia where, according to the government, continuing influxes have brought about 1.3 million refugees to 30 camps and 7 transit centres in 4 regions of the country.

In 1978 the High Commissioner launched an appeal for funds on behalf of refugees in the Horn of Africa. Several hundred thousand refugees in Somalia benefited from nearly US $11 million raised in the course of 1978 and 1979. At the same time technical assistance was ensured from a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies, which today provides some 250 experts in various fields.

The current UNHCR programme of US $41.8 million for 1981 was planned for an estimated camp population of 900,000 persons. However, the continued and massive influx has necessitated an upward revision of assistance requirements.

The 400,000 newly arrived refugees will require some US $8,270,000 for immediate non-food assistance, over and above the amounts already set aside. The food deficit for 1981 is estimated at some 163,915 million tons. There will also be need for further supplementary food for vulnerable groups and extension of educational and vocational facilities in the camps.

Sudan

Provision of an adequate supply of potable water is a major concern of the assistance programme. The polluted river water is a threat to the health situation of the refugee population. At present, short-term water supply is being provided to the camps through the co-operation of a number of voluntary agencies. The situation, however, remains unsatisfactory. A UNHCR/UNICEF project for a long-term supply of safe water will continue in 1981 and will be completed in 1982.

Progressive orientation of the UNHCR programme towards self-reliance is a major objective. An amount of US $4.15 million has been earmarked in 1981 to develop agricultural projects, animal husbandry and other self-help schemes.

Sudan continues to host the second largest refugee population in Africa. The Government estimates that there are 490,000 refugees in the country. The strain on the resources of the country, due to the presence of such large numbers of refugees, was further aggravated by the concentration of a significant portion of them in the urban centres, such as Khartoum, Gedaref, Kassala and Port Sudan.

Faced with the risk of being forced to divert funds and attention from pressing development tasks, the Sudanese Government decided to relocate unemployed refugees to organized semi-urban or rural settlements where opportunities would be created for the refugees to achieve self-sufficiency. In order to cope with its enormous task, the government declared 1980 as the "Year of the Refugee in the Sudan", and launched a world-wide campaign culminating in an International Conference on Refugees, in Khartoum in June 1980. The objectives of this campaign were to settle all refugees in organized settlements, to solve the problems of urban refugees, to tackle the problems of dependent groups such as orphans, widows, the aged and the handicapped, and to harmonize refugee settlements with those of the local people by integrating them into overall plans for regional development.

UNHCR's assistance programme in the Sudan has concentrated on supporting the establishment of these organized settlements. These would essentially be of three types: rural settlements based primarily on individual farming; rural settlements based primarily on wage employment in several of the large irrigation projects in the eastern provinces; and semi-urban settlements. In all cases, UNHCR's assistance comprises provision of housing, communal facilities such as dispensaries, schools and water supply, the transportation of refugees to the new sites, agricultural inputs, and meeting the running costs for an initial period. Food is being provided by WFP for a period of about two to three years.

To cope with the needs of urban refugees, UNHCR helped run the Refugee Counselling Service, which assists urban refugees to overcome their immediate problems and arranges educational and vocational training for them.

UNHCR's 1980 budget in the Sudan was over US $11 million.

Swaziland

The influx of refugees into Swaziland from South Africa continues unabated. UNHCR continues to promote self-sufficiency through local integration measures, which should eventually settle almost 5,000 refugees from South Africa at the Ndzevane Rural Settlement in south-eastern Swaziland, on land being provided by the Government. Efforts to provide educational assistance to refugee students continue. Refugees without specific skills are being assisted through the provision of vocational and technical training and the further expansion of these facilities is planned for during 1981.

The total UNHCR allocation for refugees in Swaziland amounted to US $1,141,600 in 1980.

The estimated refugee population is some 10,000 of whom 5,047 persons are registered.

Tanzania
(United Republic of)

There are at present some 140,000 refugees in Tanzania consisting of some 130,000 from Burundi and other groups of various origins including Zaireans, Malawians and South Africans.

UNHCR activities in Tanzania focus on assistance to organized rural settlements, particularly those for refugees from Burundi at Ulyankulu and Mishamo. Since the population of Ulyankulu had grown to a level beyond the economic capacity of the settlement, some 23,000 refugees had been transferred to a new settlement at Mishamo and Ulyankulu was re-organized to provide for more effective use of the existing facilities and a better distribution of the most fertile agricultural plots. Following the re-organization of the settlement, the remaining refugees in Ulyankulu have achieved a level of self-sufficiency comparable to the local population and the settlement was handed over to the government on 28 June 1980.

In the meantime, the population of Mishamo by the end of March 1980 rose to about 28,000. The settlement made good progress during the year, with the refugees themselves working actively in clearing, tilling and planting the land, and in constructing their own houses and communal facilities.

In addition to programmes for refugees in rural settlements, assistance towards the local integration of individual refugees in the form of supplementary aid, educational assistance, counselling programmes and for the promotion of resettlement and voluntary repatriation, was provided to various refugees, including southern African refugee students.

Towards the end of the year, the Tanzanian Government announced its decision to grant citizenship to some 35,000 refugees, mainly of Rwandese origin. This major development – the first occasion in Africa when such a large number of persons in exile have so dramatically ceased to be refugees was welcomed by the High Commissioner, whose representatives were present at the naturalization ceremonies.

UNHCR's total allocations for Tanzania in 1980 amounted to US $6.5 million.

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Uganda

The refugee population in Uganda is estimated at about 112,400 comprising 78,000 Rwandese, 34,000 Zairean and smaller groups of various origins. Prior to the events of 1979, most of the refugees, whether integrated in urban areas or living in eight organized rural settlements, were virtually self-sufficient. However, the disruption caused by the events of 1979 affected both groups of refugees, many of whom were displaced. In addition, an estimated number of 265,000 Ugandans were displaced within the country.

As a result, the assistance programme for refugees has focused on providing for the repair and reconstruction of established refugee settlements. In addition, assistance in the form of supplementary aid, counselling services, education and local integration measures for individual urban refugees has had to be substantially increased.

UNHCR spent nearly US $2 million in Uganda in 1980. In addition, some US $6.5 million were received in response to the High Commissioner's appeal, launched in July 1979 to provide assistance to displaced Ugandans, returnees and refugees. This special programme, which continued during 1980, will shortly be phased out.

Zaire

The total number of refugees in Zaire is estimated at some 400,000. Angolan refugees, the largest refugee group, numbered some 215,000; there are also over 100,000 Ugandan refugees. Other groups include 11,000 Burundi, 22,000 Rwandese and 1,800 Zambians. UNHCR's efforts have focused largely on promoting their local integration and self-sufficiency, particularly through rural settlements. Measures to improve agricultural production, water supply and health care were taken. However, efforts for the Ugandan refugees took the form of relief aid, pending more durable solutions for their plight.

During most of 1980, UNHCR continued to pursue the rehabilitation programme for Zairean repatriates who had returned to their homes following the proclamation of an Amnesty Law in June 1978. Assistance included the distribution of food, seeds, agricultural tools, blankets, kitchen utensils and a major medical programme.

UNHCR's expenditures in Zaire in 1980 were of the order of US $7.5 million.

Zambia

There are at present some 33,500 refugees in Zambia consisting of some 18,000 Angolans, 5,000 Zaireans and other smaller groups of refugees like Namibians and South Africans.

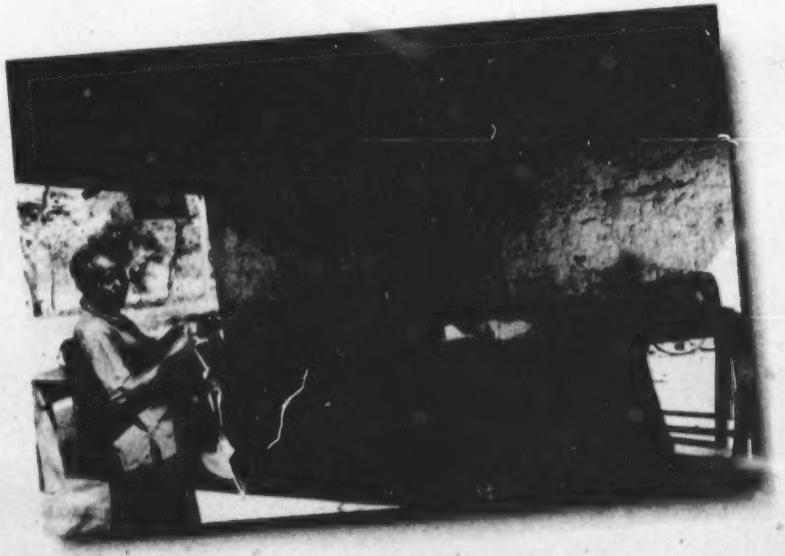
UNHCR is presently assisting the development of a large refugee settlement in Meheba for some 9,000 Angolans, 600 Zaireans and 150 Namibian refugees. The settlement will be handed over to the Government at the end of 1981. UNHCR has a large education assistance programme for refugees in Zambia and is in the process of consolidating and improving the counselling services in the country in order to make them more responsive to the refugees' individual needs. More emphasis is also being placed on assisting refugees to find employment opportunities as well as to create self help projects for individuals or small groups.

UNHCR's total allocations for Zambia in 1980 amounted to US $6.94 million.

Zimbabwe

Following the agreement signed in December 1979 at the end of the Lancaster House Conference in London, UNHCR was requested by the Government of the United Kingdom to undertake the over-all co-ordination of the international effort to assist in the repatriation of Zimbabwean refugees.

In the first phase of the repatriation, aimed at the return of refugees prior to the elections at the end of February 1980, over 33,000 refugees were repatriated under UNHCR auspices: some 18,200 from Botswana, 11,000 from Mozambique and over 4,000 from Zambia. Additional numbers of refugees returned to their country on their own. A network of transit centres was established with UNHCR's financial support to provide temporary accommodation and assistance to returnees. The repatriation resumed after the independence of Zimbabwe and by the middle of October 1980 a total of 69,000 persons had been repatriated with



UNHCR's help. Repatriation is now terminated except for a number of individu Zimbabweans in various countries who, for reasons such as studies, wish to stay abroad longer.

Events in Zimbabwe over the past years had serious effects on the rural areas of the country where the majority of the population lives. Health clinics and schools were seriously damaged, agricultural land ruined, livestock numbers sharply reduced, animal disease became widespread and crop production was severely disrupted by two seasons of drought. In addition to the returning refugees, nearly a million people are estimated to have been displaced internally during the war.

After an interagency mission to Zimbabwe in April 1980 the High Commissioner issued an appeal to the international community for a US $110 million assistance programme over a period of 12 months. In addition, food needs were estimated at 113,000 metric tons. The programme, co-ordinated by UNHCR, includes transporting returning refugees and displaced persons to their homes, and assisting them to repair, reconstruct, and re-equip them; agricultural assistance in the form of seeds, tools and fertilizers; and a comprehensive training programme for farmers. Help will also be provided to restore damaged water supply systems and repair rural roads and bridges. The programme further includes the repair and restoration of community facilities, notably rural health clinics and primary schools, the provision of necessary equipment and supplies and the training of staff. Specialized facilities will be established for the handicapped, orphans and the aged.